A Word in Season TO A DISTRACTED and TROUBLED PEOPLE.

OR,

Some Grounds tending to Unity, and a ſettling of the minds (in peace) of all thoſe who are the Sons of Peace.

Faithfully and tenderly preſented in this OUR

Day of Peace,

Though a day of trouble in many hearts;

For the preventing (if poſſible it may be) the breakings forth of another war, or that if any ſuch thing ſhould be, yet that thoſe who profeſs to follow the Lord may not be the Cauſers of it.

Written by THOMAS COLLIER.

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ACT

PEOPLE.

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The Preface.

READER, take these few lines into thy Consideration, and although it is brief and plain, it may prove usefull, through the blessing of God, and if it be a means to cool thy fiery zeal, in a way of unadvised contention, you will have no cause of repenting of thy change. Take it as it is, for with much affection to thy peace have I done it. And do not blame me for brevity or plainess, for it is a sudden work, not thought on many hours before it was done. My sense of the danger since I came into the City hath drawn this from me, the Lord make it useful to the quieting of the minds of his People, so will God have the Glory, and they the comfort, and I have my end. Farewel.

My

The Preface.

A WORD

In season to a distracted and troubled People.

MY Friends, you who do profess the name of the Lord, according to your apprehensions, in your several conditions, the consideration of the great discontents that are in and amongst some of you, even ready to break forth into a new flame and fire of War and blood, is that which much grieves my heart, and in a deep sence of this misery, have I undertaken to present these few ensuing grounds unto you, for prevention of those sad undertakings intended by some (as is manifestly declared) and I do beseech all that love and fear the Lord, not only to have their minds fixed on those (by them) supposed grounds of contention and division, but to read and weigh impartially what I have here presented, and I doubt not but that it will silence and quickly put a period to such intentions or undertakings, as I do perceive were in the minds of some; and in this I do appeal unto the Lord, that my end in presenting these lines, is not either fear or flattery of men, but as the discharge of

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my duty to the Lord, his people, and my Country, to whom I ow all that I have.

The first ground I shall present unto you, is, That the Name and honour of the Lord is concerned in it; which should be more precious to his people than their lives and liberties: and it is the duty, and should be the practice of all the Saints in all their actions to do all to the glory of God (which I suppose will be easily granted.) But the question may be, how it will appear that the intentions of some in the fomenting a new War, will be to the dishonor of God, seeing that the common right and freedom, and making good of promises and engagements, is the pretended cause of it, and the dishonor of God in the world, by the unfaithfulness of professing men, that are covenant breakers? To which I answer. 1. That the name of the Lord is much concerned in it. Have not the Wars of *England*, and the works of God done amongst us by it, been the worlds wonder? And have not the professing people been the instruments in the hand of God in the work, and have been taken notice of so to be by all, both amongst us and round about us? And would it not be a great advantage to the Enemy to reproach and blaspheme, after so long a conteſt, and such success from the Lord, at last to be sheathing our Swords in each others bowels? What will the World conclude from hence, but that there was no finger of the Lord at all with us, no Divine hand over-powring and over-ruling? or else at best, that for sin and iniquity God hath suffered you to destroy one another? Oh consider, that its the most eminent token of Gods displeasure a-

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gainst a people, when Friends, Companions, Brethren, shall be found lifting up the Sword each against other. *Moses* was tender of the honour of the Lord, and preferred it before his own interest, *Numb.* 14. 13. when the Lord told him that he would destroy the children of *Israel* for their rebellion, and make of him a greater people than they, but *Moses* said, Then *the Egyptians will hear, and the Nations will hear, and say, that the Lord was not able to bring his people into the Land of* Canaan, *therefore hath he destroyed them in the Wilderness.* Oh think on this, what will become of the great name of the Lord, that hath been so eminently manifest amongst us, if now at last the fire of contention should consume us?

2. I answer, that the Covenants and ingagements are not altogether broken, but much we do enjoy, as to the substance of what was expected, though not in the formality of it.

3. If such a thing be in good earnest, as to particulars, yet the breach of promise will light upon him or them most principally concerned in it, and not upon every individual person; not upon those who cannot help it: and therefore it is not their duty to be meddling in a way of contesting wars, so the remedy they seem to take, will prove more dishonourable to God, and more destructive to themselves and others, than the disease, were it granted to be so bad as by some is supposed.

4. If the honor of the Lord doth consist, any part of it, in the free passage of the Gospel, and a freedom for his people to worship him according to his Will, he is as much, if not more, honored in this particular,

lar, than I could or can yet see in or under any other way of Government.

2. Consider, that as such a practice will be dishonourable to the Lord, so it will undoubtedly prove destructive to your selves and others. Oh be not found at last to be self-destroyers; you will destroy your selves, and families, and may shed the blood of others, and hazard the cause of God, and the Nation it self, if the Lord prevent you not in your Designs; truly the very thoughts of it is dreadful unto me, upon both these accounts, the dishonor of God, and the sad events that are like to follow; and that you who profess to know God, should desire to kindle such a fire; certainly if it be kindled then it will burn and consume.

3. There is no readier way can be imagined to accomplish the Enemies design than self-division; I am confident that there is no other way by which it can be accomplished, and therefore give not that away at last, by frowardness, contention, and division, that could nere be taken from you by violence, therin will you shew not only your want of wisdom, but your weakness if not your wickedness to the whole world; and it is the very high way to lose all.

4. The Lords people should not be men of blood, I am sure Religion doth not teach it, but rather to seek the good of all, to pray for all, but to destroy none. It cannot be imagined that the endeavouring to turn things upside down, can be without the shedding of much blood, therefore its much better to rest thankful to God for what we have, than to adventure such hazardous and bloody designs, and it may be with

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loss of all; the blood-thirsty, and deceitfull man shall not live out half his daies: Oh therefore manifest your selves (all ye that fear the Lord) to be men of Peace, and not of War, men willing to save, but not to destroy; manifest your selves to be what you would be esteemed, by your self-denyal, for the Lord will one day make inquisition for blood, then blessed are they that are guiltless.

5. It is appointment of the Lord, and portion of his people, rather to be suffering with Christ, and for him (thereby shewing themselves to be the children of a heavenly Father) than to be ploting and conspiring how to make themselvs Lords of the world, by endeavouring the undermining of others, under what pretence soever: in this particular, wherein we are most like our Lord, we endeavour to be at the fartheſt distance, it is altogether unbecoming, and I had almost said inconsistent with the State of a Christian to lay the foundation of his Liberty in the blood of others, but rather to suffer with patience as a Christian: unless called unto it by a lawful authority.

God hath given no rule as a form of Government to any people in the world, but what he once did to Israel, which is no binding rule to other Nations; there is no man can from a direct rule in the Scriptures chalk out either Governours or a Government, or the basis upon it should be infallibly founded, that we may command, say thou hast erred and transgressed such a rule; but the Foundation of Government is in God, and he pulleth down one and setteth up another, as he pleaseth; he will sometimes chastise

a people by the insolencies of their Princes, and he will sometimes chastise the Pride of Princes by their people, so both of these, 1 *King.* 12. 13, 14, 16. and all this is of the Lord. Hence it is that the Saints are exhorted to submit to magistrates because they are ordained of the Lord, and the powers that be are ordained or ordered of God, *Rom.* 13. and whosoever resisteth resisteth the Ordinance of God, and if there be no Magisterial power, but is ordained of God, then the Magisterial Power and Authority of *England* is ordained of God, be the form and method of it what it will, yet while it is in being we ought to submit unto it. Here have been several governments in this Commonwealth of late, and all had their honour in their place, and if more should arise, those subjected under it ought to obey, and not to seek deliverances by plottings and underminings, but if it should be evil to wait on the Lord, till he please to change it.

Ob. *Then it had been the duty of all to have sate still in the beginning of the wars, and not to have opposed the authority that then was.*

Ans. There was a visible face of authority (*viz.* the Parliament) calling for assistance, and all the proceedings since, have either had a visible face of a Magisterial authority, countenancing it, or of an overpowring presence of God, subjecting all unto it, but if any should arise to oppose the authority that now is, or else there is none in *England*, and of God too, or else it should not be, and I trust that it will answer Gods ends too, in some measure; but they that desire to begin new troubles, have neither the face of

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authority to call them to it, or countenance them in it, nor any visible power of God manifest with them, that any might suppose God calling them to such a work.

7. The Lords people do yet enjoy more liberty under this Government than I do know any where promised in the Scriptures before the coming of Christ. This I am sure, that the Lord hath promised, that in the world, for his Sake we shall have tribulation, but I do not know any promise of that liberty we now enjoy, neither have I faith enough to believe that it will long continue, unless the day of Christs glorious appearing be nearer at hand, than some would have it. Oh therefore be not so earnest after that which it may be thou canst not attain, but be thankful. Discontentedness is an evident discovery of unthankfulness, its that which doth altogether unfit men for thankfulness, and indeed, me thinks, the mercies we enjoy at this day, calls aloud for thanfulness, and not so soon to forget his wonderous works; the thoughts of what we now enjoy would have been in our distress a refreshing unto us; O foolish people and unwise, will ye thus requite the Lord for all his goodness to you, as to involve our Land in blood again, if you can: Oh study thankfulness rather, and how to improve the mercy you enjoy to the honour of God.

8. Thankfulness to God for mercies received, is the ready way to obtain more; Oh therefore that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works done amongst us; if any thing done by us may be a means by which God may con-

haue our Liberty, and increaſe our mercies, it is our ſuitable and thankful walking in the enjoyment of mercy; and if any thing as a means in us deprive us of what we now enjoy it, twill be our unworthy and unthankful walking in the enjoyment of mercy; for this ſin God gives up men to vile affections, *Rom.* 1. 21, 24. Oh ſet not your ſelves at a diſtance from mercy by trampling under foot the mercy you do or may enjoy.

9. The cauſe of God in reſpect of civil liberty, and alſo of religion, is not ſo loſt as ſome pretend; as for Religion I need ſay no more than before; as for civil Liberties, propriety is maintained, and if God ſee it good, what is amiſs, in his time, ſhall be ſet in order; do not endeavour to force it, but rather pray for it, and wait with patience.

10. Know that righteouſneſs will never be ſet up in the World, ſo fully as ſome deſire it, before the reign of the Righteous King, *viz.* the perſonal appearing and reign of Chriſt, thoſe who do imagine a reign of Saints over the world before that day, do deceive themſelves; therefore be leſs in looking after the Governors and Governments of this world, and more in the expectation of him that ſhall rule the world in righteouſneſs, and ſhall break in pieces the Oppreſſors, he that is the deſire of his Saints, and will anſwer all their wants.

11. That as Chriſts Kingdom is not of this world, no more ſhould the Saints be, if the Lord by his providence give power and authority into any of their hands, they ſhould uſe it to his praiſe, but not impatiently hunt after it, undermine others to attain it, nor

nor imbrue their hands in blood for the attaining of a Civil liberty, especially being without authority, to endeavour the doing of it in the undermining of the Authority established, seek not too much after the Kingdoms of the world before the time, as Christ is content without it (in the manifestation) so be ye also.

12. If you suppose a wrong, or an evil done by those in present power, your duty is not to seek revenge, but to leave it to the Lord, who will judge every man according to his Works, therefore avenge not your selves.

13. It is the duty, and should be the care, of the Saints, not to suffer as evil doers, and busie bodies in other mens matters, if they do so *God* will have no honor by it, nor themselves comfort in it, but if they suffer for well-doing happy are they, 1 *Pet.* 4.14,15.

14. There is no promise of a blessing upon such a practise, such an acting as seems to be in the minds of some have neither precept or president for it, or promise unto, and with what peace of conscience, or expectation of a blessing they should undertake it, I know not, therefore let such know, they must repent, and, it may be, when it is to late.

15. Saints should so act and so walk as that they may be found of Christ in peace when he comes, and not to be smiting one another, or raising or making combustions in the world, but rather no be doing the will of the Lord, that Christ may say unto them, when he comes, *well done good and faithful Servant*; and not so walk as to be accounted evil servants, and unprofitable Servants, their account will be sad.

16. Suppose the Lord hath purposed to exalt this man

man, (who is now Lord Protector) over these nations, truly then all that will oppose must be broken in pieces, and the actions of *God* speak very much this way; whom *God* will exalt, who can disthrone; when *God* would make *Nabuchadnezzar* King over the World, the Nations that would not submit unto him must be broken, *Jer.* 27. Consider what I say, and fear to oppose, lest you fight against *God.*

17. Let all honest men, who fear the Lord, rather submit unto the Government, and join in with it, and pray for it, that so in its peaceable rule they may have peace, and what they see amiss, seek a reformation in a way of Love, and not in a way of wrath; cast away all bitterness and frowardness, and evil-speaking from you, as God hath given you a Governor (though against your will) who is willing to rule for your good, and to protect you in your Liberties, Oh, make his heart and his hands strong for that work by your prayers for him, and your cleaving to him, so will God have the glory and you the Consolation.

18. But if any will be perverse and persist in a way of contesting, and adventure the beginning of new stirs, I say no more, but first, that I have discharged my duty and conscience, and secondly, my soul come not thou into their secrets, neither have fellowship with them in their waies, for it tends to confusion, and destruction will be the end thereof.

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